

Statement of the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association On the FCC's Biennial Review of Broadcast Ownership Rules

(Adopted May 8, 2003 by NLGJA's Board of Directors)

Whereas the Federal Communications Commission initiated on Sept. 12, 2002, a biennial review of its media ownership rules, one mandated by section 202 (h) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996;

Whereas FCC Chairman Michael Powell has described this review as "the most comprehensive look at media ownership ever undertaken by the FCC;"

Whereas the regulations that emerge from this FCC process are likely to initiate the most dramatic changes in media ownership in this country since the FCC was created;

Whereas those changes could have a profound effect on the quality of the news the American people receive and on how well the broadcast media meet their legal requirements to serve the public interest by maintaining a diversity of views, meeting local needs and promoting competition;

Whereas we, the journalists who work for broadcast and newspaper companies, will be directly affected by these changes in media ownership;

Whereas FCC Chairman Powell has chosen to hold only one public hearing on Feb. 27, 2003, where ordinary Americans and civic groups could directly testify before the Commission on these important matters;

Whereas the six ownership rules the FCC seeks to change are extremely complex and involve virtually every branch of the modern mass media;

Whereas the news and information needs of the nation's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender residents are not being consistently met under the current media ownership system;

Be it resolved that the board of directors of the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association:

- 1) Calls upon the FCC to postpone its scheduled issuing of rules this spring until it has convened a series of public hearings in different parts of the country, so as to allow the maximum possible input by the public into the Commission's deliberations.
- 2) Calls upon media companies in the United States to provide adequate news coverage of this issue so that the American people can better grasp the nature of these impending changes.
- 3) Calls upon all other journalists and organizations of journalists in the United States to join us in this appeal.